

**AHVRP 2016 Extraordinary Program Award**  
**Jean Morrow, Project Liaison & Director of Volunteers, Citizens Memorial Healthcare**

Jean Morrow nominated her Hospitality House Project. For several years the auxiliary board had received requests to help with motel lodging for out-of-town patients and families with special needs. Those requests lead the board to vote six years ago to raise the money to construct a house to be used by out-of-town patients and their families during treatment times. The volunteers hosted a kickoff dinner and auction, mystery dinners, ladies brunch for Mother's Day, etc. to inform the general public and begin raising money. Contacts were made with possible lead donors, businesses, employees, administration, medical staff, etc. to receive donations and pledges for the project. Originally, the auxiliary raised over \$550,000 with 62% coming from direct donations from auxiliary members and their spouses. The lead donation was from one of our auxiliary members and the house was named after her family (Tremain). It took just over two years to raise enough money to begin the construction of the house. The house with 6 guest rooms with private baths, a gathering room, kitchen, dining room, laundry room, library and computer room, vending machine area, tornado safe rooms, storage rooms, and a volunteer sleep room was completed in May, 2013. Employees were given the opportunity to purchase registered items for the house or make payroll deduction pledges for the project. Many hospital departments went together to collect funds for purchases. The overall support was amazing! When we opened the house in June, 2013, everything we needed – appliance, all furniture, decorating items, TV's, linens, window blinds, out-door furniture had been donated! Later the auxiliary board purchased a generator to assure no power outages. Our first guest was in June, 2013 and since then we have provided 1,937 guest nights in the house.

The volunteers spent many hours planning, raising money, etc. for the house. In addition to the planning events, the volunteers hosted a shower for the house after registering all of the needed kitchen ware and appliances, furniture, window blinds, pictures and other decorations needed in the house. They contacted local businesses to donate plumbing fixtures, towel bars, etc. The volunteers made contact with the vendors for the auxiliary fundraising sales and requested linens, TVs, etc. These items were either donated or sold at cost for the project. After the completion of the house, the volunteers washed kitchen dishes, cookware, etc. and organized the kitchen, cleaned appliances, washed towels, blankets and linens, made beds – moved everything into the house. In addition, they hosted an open house following the ribbon cutting ceremony and gave tours of the house to guests. One of the volunteers is a decorator and she donated her time to decorate the house with donated accessories. Since the house opened it has been staffed by volunteers 24/7 when we have guests in the house. One cancer patient guest had to live at the house for 6 months – when she left, she sent a note to thank the volunteers for all their work and sharing that they became a part of her family while she stayed at the house. The hospital pays the utilities and upkeep on the house and the auxiliary pay for supplies purchased for the house. The hospital laundry washes linens and blankets while the volunteer laundry the towels at the house. The hospital provides a part-time housekeeper to clean each day we have guests and at

checkout of guests.

The mission of Citizens Memorial Healthcare is “Caring for every generation through exceptional services by leading physicians and a compassionate healthcare team.” Our goal is to exceed their expectations! This entire project was born from the compassion of the auxiliary board for the patients and family members who came to our facilities from out of town – including many cancer patients who found it necessary to be in town for an extended time during their treatments. Many of these patients were experiencing financial hardships and inconvenience traveling back and forth for treatments. This was a way we could provide them a comfortable, convenient, quiet place for them to stay and rest during a very difficult time. There is no doubt that we have exceeded their expectations! Many of the volunteers at the house have a special reason to support this project. Some are themselves cancer survivors or they have family members who have gone through cancer treatments. Probably 80% of our guests are cancer patients. It has been amazing to hear from the volunteers and/or the guests how helpful it is to be able to share their stories with someone who understands what they are experiencing. There is no doubt that the volunteers are a key part of our “compassionate healthcare team!” The leadership team and other departments have been so supportive of this project. Nutritional services allows guests to order from a menu anything they want to dinner, they prepare and deliver to the house every night at no additional cost to the guests. Administration provides the utilities and upkeep of the house and laundry and housekeeping provide daily services. The hospital social services department expresses much appreciation for the availability of the house for family members of hospital patients.

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